

been talking about all these years. This is something that we talked about during the campaign of 1994. And this is something that the President is trying to reject. He has come out and said he is going to veto this. It is very difficult for us to understand how he can talk about vetoing it when these are things he has talked about, when he ran for President of the United States on this very platform—welfare reform, reducing taxes, Medicare reform, balancing the budget. That is exactly what we are trying to do. I want to stick with this and not give in.

There is an interesting statement that was made just the other day by the President. I will quote that statement. I think this gets to the crux of where we are in this debate. He said: "Probably, there are people in this room still mad at me for the budget because you think I raised your taxes too much. It might surprise you to know that I think we raised them too much, too."

This is exactly what we have been saying. If you were not for the largest single tax increase in the world—and that is not conservative Republican Jim Inhofe talking, that is the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee when this was passed—if you were not for that largest tax increase that now even Bill Clinton says he was not for, and that was his tax increase, then you ought to support repealing part of that tax increase. That is exactly what we are doing with some of the tax cuts that we are suggesting, Mr. President.

I think that when you talk about the cuts, it is interesting that we have a President now who is saying over and over again that the Republicans are trying to cut Medicare and Medicaid.

I will read you another quote, and this came from the President in a speech to the AARP on the October 5, 1993, just 2 years ago: "Today, Medicaid and Medicare are going up three times the rate of inflation. We propose to let it go up two times the rate of inflation. That is not a Medicare or Medicaid cut. So when you hear all this business about 'cuts,' let me caution you that that is not what is going on."

So there is the President saying—very accurately, I might add—back in 1993, that we are talking about slowing down the growth in the areas of Medicare and Medicaid because if we do not do it, the system is going to go into bankruptcy. He is turning around now and saying that which we want to do on the Republican side is cutting Medicare and Medicaid when, in fact, it is not.

So it is a very difficult thing when you are dealing with these moving targets, and you have a President that says one thing one day, has his polls around the White House, and he says something different the next day. That is very discouraging.

A TRIP TO BOSNIA

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I am going to be leaving today, going over to Bosnia. I have never seen something that is as critical as it is today on what the President is trying to do by sending our troops on the ground in Bosnia. Two and a half years ago, I predicted, when the President wanted to do airdrops in Bosnia, thereby giving the Americans a position within that warring faction of three different factions and going with one side against the other in getting involved in it, I said at that time, first, we will have airdrops, then air attacks and, after that, the President is going to want to send troops in on the ground. It was the other day, Michael Rose, the British general, commander of the Bosnian troops—he probably is the greatest authority on Bosnia—said, "If America sends troops into Bosnia on the ground, they will lose more lives than they lost in the Persian Gulf war."

Mr. President, I think that is exactly what is going to happen. I asked Secretary Perry and Secretary Christopher in the Senate Armed Services Committee, "Is this mission that we have in Bosnia—that mission being twofold, containing a civil war and, two, protecting the integrity of NATO—worth the loss of hundreds of American lives?"

Secretary Perry said, "Yes." Secretary Christopher said, "Yes." General Shalikashvili said, "Yes."

That is why I am going to Bosnia. I want the American people to know what kind of risk we are sending our troops in there to sustain. It was not until we went month after month, when we tried to get President Clinton, by resolution, to bring our troops out of Somalia—he did not do that until, finally, 18 of our rangers were murdered in cold blood and their corpses were dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. I do not want that to happen in the streets of Gorazde or the streets of Sarajevo.

I think we have a job to explain to the American people what the risks are over there and to stop this obsession that President Clinton has in sending our troops into Bosnia on the ground. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GREGG). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SIMON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. SIMON. Mr. President, I was going to offer an amendment on legislative appropriations because when we enacted the Hatch Act, unbeknownst to virtually every Member, we passed a

prohibition for Members to send letters of recommendation to anyone who is not a schedule C or political appointee.

If any Member sends a letter to a U.S. attorney or to the EPA or anyone else recommending an employee or recommending a friend or anyone else for a civil service position, that is now a Federal crime. It is incredible. It just does not make sense.

I am pleased to say that my cosponsors have been Senator REID, Senator SIMPSON, Senator LOTT, and Senator DOLE has indicated he wants to cosponsor the bill.

I have word that Senator STEVENS is willing to mark up the bill, hold a hearing if necessary, mark up the bill separately, so I will not offer it as an amendment on this appropriation.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now turn to consideration of Calendar No. 220, H.R. 2492, the legislative branch appropriations bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2492) making appropriations for the legislative branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following brief statements, the bill be advanced to third reading and final passage occur, all without further objection or amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DOLE. I will be happy to yield to the manager on the other side and then I will make a brief statement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise to support the passage of the bill, H.R. 2492, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for fiscal year 1996. The provisions in this bill are exactly the same as those contained in the conference report on H.R. 1854, which overwhelmingly passed the Senate on September 22, 1995, by a vote of 94 to 4 but was subsequently vetoed by the President on October 3. At that time, as Members will recall, the President indicated